Scholastic Education and Biblical Interpretation.

AN

INAUGURAL ADDRESS,

AT THE OPENING OF THE

TROY UNIVERSITY,

SEPTEMBER 9, 1858.

BY JAMES STRONG, S. T. D.,

Vice President and Professor of Biblical Literature in the Troy University.

TROY, N. Y.:
WILLIAM H. YOUNG, 216 RIVER STREET.
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Inaugural Address.*

In consequence of the recent absence of Dr. M'Clintock in Europe, it has devolved upon me, at short notice, to preface by a formal introduction the opening of these halls for academic instruction. It would ill become me, called in at the eleventh hour, yet receiving first in order an equal honor with others who have borne the heat and burden of the day of preliminary effort, were I to enlarge in eulogy or gratulation upon the enterprise this day so hopefully inaugurated,—the success of which is indeed so nearly secured. It may justly be said, that others have labored and I have entered into the fruit of their labors. Nor would the lateness of my connection with the scheme of education proposed in the founding of the Troy University, warrant my undertaking to set forth at length the aims, plans and prospects of an institution with which I have so suddenly and unexpectedly found myself associated.†

* The author deems it due to his readers to remind them that this address was not properly an Inaugural to the Professorship which he holds, but was designed merely to fill a place (properly belonging to the President, and up to a late period in the arrangements assigned to another person,) in the general literary exercises incident to the occasion upon which it was delivered, and that its subject—the trite one of education—was prescribed by the circumstances of that occasion. In committing it to the press—at this distance of time from its delivery, in pursuance of the request of the Trustees, coupling it with the Inaugural Addresses of his associates, the author therefore presents it in the same form—hastily executed as it then necessarily was, with only a few verbal alterations, and the addition of a few notes.

† For these the reader is referred to the "Annual Announcement," issued in a pamphlet form, by the Trustees of the University. The subject will recur in the course of this address.

All that I can presume or be expected to do, in discharge of my present duty, is to join in the common gladness of the hour, and offer a few practical suggestions, or rather sentiments, which its occurrence has called forth in my own mind, but which are nevertheless based upon convictions that have been for years ripening in my judgment.

Education is a term of wide import. Overpassing the limits of its original application, which refers simply to the nurture of the child through youth up to adult years, but never losing its etymological significance, the *leading forth* of something within, it has come to designate the training of the mental faculties, especially of youth, to full development, and, as subsidiary to this, the furnishing of the mind with the elementary facts of science and materials of thought. This process of discipline may be carried on under varied circumstances, and the requisite knowledge may be imparted by different instrumentalities as well as drawn from different sources; while both the result and the method may vary, according to the extent and thoroughness in any given case. Hence arise what are usually termed the several kinds of education. But it should be noted that under whatever form, education is in itself always one and the same, namely, the preparation of the mind by the requisite information and habits of thought, for the pursuit in view, and only differs in its direction, degree and mode of attainment. Setting aside, as inappropriate to the present connection, the first two of these elements of variation, all the modern educational schemes or methods may be resolved into two, the scholastic and the practical; in other words, education in a school, before entering the contemplated sphere of life, and education by the practice of the actual duties of that vocation.

Each of these modes seems to possess such peculiar and exclusive advantages, that their respective claims have often been set in array against one another. An active jealousy has even been evinced at times by the uneducated in schools towards the scholastically educated, which has not unfrequently been reciprocated by as decided a superciliousness of the lettered towards the unlettered. A tendency to the invidious distinction of caste has been engendered between the book-learned graduate from academic halls, and the farmer, mechanic or merchant, who has acquired his successful skill solely from his experience as a farmer's boy, apprentice or clerk. A sufficient cure of this mutual disaffection is not to be found in the catholic moral of the famous parable of Menenius Agrippa on the part of the Roman patricians to the schismatic plebeians, which has its parallel in the Apostle's doctrine, that "the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of thee;' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'" The admonition of interdependence, drawn from the daily application of abstruse science to useful inventions, does not adequately enforce the lesson of charity and esteem. A more fundamental insight into the relations of study to action, is requisite in order to bring their votaries into harmony.

The just bond between these two elements—which indeed are no other than thought and execution, is clearly furnished in the foregoing definition of education itself. If this be truly a mental preparation for a certain course of life or sphere of activity, it must in every instance necessarily be acquired prior to the entrance upon the contemplated duties, or at least before they can be successfully discharged. The question is therefore reduced simply to this: What is the most efficient mode of obtaining this pre-requisite ability? Is it by a definite course of study, pursued under the direction of teachers, who have devoted

themselves specially to the several branches of knowledge required; or is it by spontaneous, or at best, casually guided efforts to attain the truth, in a series of experiments, with but a dim perception of the result sought, and by instruction chiefly from the errors committed in the search? When the issue is seen in this light, the world at large has never hesitated to prefer the direct to the indirect method of tuition, for all purposes in which literary qualifications are involved. In the former, the student is presented with the accumulated wisdom of the past, concentrated in text-books, applied and commented upon by oral teaching, and combined with every collateral aid, such as continuous prosecution in an institution expressly adapted to the purpose, the stimulus of association with others of like age, tastes and destination, and the thousand moulding and elevating influences of academic life; while in the latter case, he can usually do little more, in his comparatively isolated and unassisted gropings after knowledge, than avail himself of the dearly bought wit of experience, or the accidental rays of light which may ultimately reach him from the general literary radiance diffused through the community, but which, for the most part, are really derived after all, more or less directly, from those very beacons of science, whose immediate illumination he affects to contemn.

I have little faith in the self-taught scholar, as such. Rarely, if ever, does he fail to betray a certain crudity and lack of balance in his mental equipment, when brought into competition with the thoroughly disciplined graduate. His original talents and power may have been greater, but his more regularly trained fellow will nevertheless very generally outstrip him in the race for preferment, even in an ordinarily intelligent community. The supple athlete, fragile as may be his form, will yet fling to the dust his brawny antagonist,

if devoid of the skill that always masters force. The self-educated man is like the native crab-stock, which, although thrifty in its indigenous mould, was but a dwarf among its forest neighbors; and should it eventually stand amid the palace garden that may be formed around its site, and at length receive the careful pruning and cultivation of the horticulturist's hand, it will ever yield the same wild fruit of acrid taste. The school-bred man is like the improved variety, which, grafted in the nursery, although with an exotic scion, is sure to afford the luscious pome whithersoever transplanted. The truly educated man will always evince a superior mental culture, and wield a proportionately greater, or at least, more healthful influence. The *parvenu* is a character, common in the world of letters as in social life, and is marked by the same flashy traits. Next to the sincere saint, the genuine scholar belongs to the only true aristocracy, the nobility of mind. Comparisons of this kind are somewhat odious, and personal criticisms are apt to be invidious. I will therefore select a few examples by way of contrast in this particular, which are sufficiently removed from our own age and connections to preclude prejudice, and yet are so well known as to afford a clear illustration.*

*I might have interposed, as an *argumentum ad hominem*, the direct appeal, Of what use is it to build colleges and schools, if men may be more effectually trained (whether in more or less time is of comparatively little account,) for the duties of life without them? On this theory, such institutions are a positive injury, by dwarfing and stultifying the native faculties of the mind, and modern civilization is entirely wrong in encouraging them.

It is freely conceded that some men—here and there one—have risen to great social and even intellectual eminence without these helps, but this is rather an argument for than against their adoption; inasmuch as these have been instances of rare natural mental vigor, adduced precisely to show what may be accomplished in despite, and not by the aid of circumstances. If uneducated men, *generally*, were equal or superior to the educated, in knowledge, mental ability and influence, the detractors of scholasticism would have a fair plea; but no one pretends that this is true. Such isolated cases, therefore, merely sustain the importance of scholarly training. *Exceptio probat regulam.* On the other hand, who can doubt that even these individuals, had they possessed the advantages of early and thorough education, would have been still greater and more useful in their generation? Unquestionably none lamented more than themselves, that they had to make their way through life in the face of these disadvantages. If a few have succeeded thus in scaling the heights of fame, they are indeed deserving of double honor, not because they voluntarily

Cicero's epithet of "novus homo," applied to himself, refers rather to political than literary antecedents; yet the fulsome egotism and turgid verbosity, that strike the school-boy reader of his forensic compositions, are characteristic of the upstart commoner; although the acumen, profundity, learning and justness of his philosophical writings, bear the evident impress of his Greek instructors and Attic studies. Athens was then the university of the world; and thither flocked the aspirants to fame in letters, to catch the inspiration of the mighty intellects of former ages, and to commune with the celebrities of their own day. I shall here introduce but two of her prominent masters of philosophy, whose juxtaposition in time and circumstances, yet diversity of preparation and career, affords a tolerably fair instance of the contrast which I wish to bring out. It must be premised, however, that the adage, "Knowledge is power," is so strictly true, and so universally has the teacher been indispensable to its impartation, that no eminent character appears in history, who has not been more or less assisted in gaining his renown by scholasticism, either in his own person or among his associates. A strictly illiterate or untutored mind is necessarily incompetent to acquire or exercise dominion over others. All the examples which I propose to notice will therefore be found to exihibit somewhat of this indispensable element, and my object will be to show, that the extent and permanence of their influence have been mostly in proportion to the compass and thoroughness of their own early mental training, in whatever form of schools their times afforded.

The son of obscure parents, his father a statuary, and his mother a midwife, residents of a little borough near

dispensed with the aids of discipline and science, but because they were providentially deprived of them. Ordinary mortals will be sure to rue the experiment, if they presume to cast away the levers without which intellectual giants have occasionally moved the world.

Athens, Socrates, soon after his father's death, being defrauded of his little patrimony by his guardian, found himself cast destitute upon the world, while yet a youth, and compelled to engage in mechanical and even menial employments for a subsistence. Without the advantage of a liberal education or the means of securing the tuition of the eminent teachers who already began to abound in the metropolis, yet burning with an innate thirst for knowledge, he was forced to avail himself of such casual helps, or rather hints, as his humble avocation there allowed, probably confined at first to the public means of instruction; till, gradually attracted into those literary circles for which his tastes and aspirations were preparing him, he at length in his manhood derived some intellectual development and guidance from occasional intercourse with the leading philosophers of the city. In mature life began his public mission of recalling the Greek mind from the skeptical abstractions of the sophists to the common-sense principles of scientific and moral truth, by his peculiar method of appeal to the personal consciousness and practical judgment of his listeners. He had himself passed through a varied outward experience and a severe course of inward discipline. He had always struggled with the bonds of penury, and was still poor; yet he had given his services to his country, and had won honors on the battle field. In addition to his intellectual efforts, he had contended with a naturally violent temper, and had gained so complete a mastery over himself as to be able to live peaceably with the termagant whom he expressly married in order to practice patience. And now we find him engaged, not in formal lectures nor written treatises, but in insidious questions put to the artisan, the laborer, the stranger along the street, first gaining their assent to evident propositions, and thence leading them to the admission of new and important conclusions. The passengers

jest at his uncouth figure, the bystanders remark upon his homely physiognomy, the populace laugh at his odd queries, his auditors look puzzled at his strange observations, as he turns kindly but abruptly away, and seeks another knot of hearers. Soon his person is ridiculed upon the stage, his philosophy is attacked by poet and dialectician, and eventually the cry of heresy is raised against his doctrine. Malicious politicians plot his destruction, and he dies magnanimously refusing the questionable expedients of his friends for his safety. Has he succeeded or failed in his undertaking? The sequel proves that he awakened a more earnest spirit of inquiry into the grounds of human belief; but he developed no new system, scarcely any new theory; and but for the prosecution of his work by others by a different method, his labor had proved abortive, the movement which he set on foot had died with him. This was because he founded no school, and left no organized institution. His want of early scholastic methods rendered him incompetent as well as indisposed to combine into a consistent and complete form the bold and profoundly true views which his powerful genius enabled him to take of the relations of men and things, and his isolated or rather fragmentary habits of instruction neither afforded him occasion to construct the details and fill up the chasms in his scheme of philosophy, nor his pupils the opportunity to concentrate his scattered teachings in their own minds, or around any external nucleus. He engendered the spirit of scholarship; but he was not the parent of its body.

Among the many Athenian youths who hung upon the lips of this original but unpolished thinker, was one known even in that extreme democracy as born of aristocratic blood; a descendant on his father's side of Codrus, the Attic Washington, and on his mother's of Solon, the Attic Moses. Carefully instructed from his

earliest years in grammar, music and gymnastics by the most distinguished teachers of his time, he is said, while yet a youth, to have contended with success at the Isthmian and other games, and to have made no mean attempts in various styles of poetry; but the philosophical powers which eventually rendered the name of Plato famous, although his mind had already received some bent in that direction from the writings and personal instructions of several eminent philosophers, were comparatively latent till, in his twentieth year, he came under the powerfully formative influence of Socrates' teaching, whose constant disciple he remained till the death of his master, and of whose doctrines his own writings are the fullest exponent. But for this tuition, it may safely be asserted, Platonism had never existed; a system which, more than any other mere human philosophy, is akin with the pure truth of Christianity by reason of its exalted views of the spiritual. Those sentiments for which Socrates might well claim inspiration, found in the scholastically trained Plato a competent prophet, and in the Academy which the latter founded an institution for their perpetuity and dissemination. The martyred soul of the teacher reappeared in the person of his disciple, and the transmigration was in the ascending scale.

My position, the superiority of school-bred over untutored intellect, even in swaying the popular masses, as well as in permanent influence upon the world,* is equally illustrated in the contrastive history presented in the Acts of the Apostles between the career of the unlettered fisherman of Galilee among the Jews, and

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* Out of a recent list of forty-four names (many of them eminent in some department of literature) of persons whose biographies are adduced for the praiseworthy object of stimulating the exertions of students in embarrassed circumstances, ("Self-taught Men," by B. B. Edwards, 1859,) scarcely more than six, (namely, Heyne, Samuel Lee, Thomas Scott, Niebuhr, Adam Clarke, and Sir William Jones,) are properly entitled to rank as *scholars*, and even these, (with perhaps a single exception, Dr. Clarke,) received material advantages from early attendance at school, and were largely indebted to private tuition for their subsequent proficiency.

the mission of the pupil of Gamaliel among the Gentiles. For aught we know, both possessed equal natural genius. In bodily vigor the former appears to have had the advantage. Each, we know, had an ardent energetic temperament, and both were alike endowed with supernatural qualifications; yet the one has left his broad and deep imprint on the whole circle of theological truth, as well as ecclesiastical enterprise, while the other, after the few initiatory measures which his priority in the field of action enabled him to achieve, is scarcely known as prominent in the religious scheme into which his name enters, save in the prelatical assumptions of Papal tradition. Here is a lesson strikingly in point for those who unfavorably compare the power for usefulness in the church, of collegiate alumni with the practical effectiveness of self-made men so called. If the rough Peter was emblematical of the "rock" upon which Christ founded his ecclesiastical edifice, in granting him the distinction of admitting the first members within its pales; yet his influence was soon cast into the shade by that of the "chosen vessel," Paul, whose studiously cultivated and well informed judgment gave him, from the hour of his conversion, a deeper insight into the mysteries of the Gospel than the whole college of "those who seemed to be pillars" appear to have attained beside. The dozen phylarchs of Christianity had not been complete without the thirteenth, as if the Master had remedied an essential defect by a supplement "born out of due time."

A third instance of scholastic as contrasted with experimental preparation for the higher pursuits of life, drawn from the comparatively modern history of moral enterprises, must suffice in addition to the foregoing parallels from profane and sacred antiquity. About the middle of the seventeenth century, George Fox, the son of a weaver of Leicestershire, began to

preach in England his peculiar doctrine of the sufficiency of the Holy Spirit, irrespective of the human appliances and qualifications ordinarily deemed essential for the enlightenment of the mind, in order both to private piety and ministerial usefulness. Brought up himself with little education as a shoemaker and afterwards a grazier, when the light of a personal experience of religion burst upon his soul, it also revealed to him the darkness of immorality, ungodliness and infidelity, that rested like a pall over his countrymen; and in his new-born zeal he conceived himself to be divinely commissioned to rebuke the errors and vices of the times. This fanatical tenet led him not only to contemn all accessories to the inward illumination, but also to utter his message in a dogmatic tone, which brought upon him the opposition of the learned as well as the hostility of the dissolute, both of whom he equally defied. But the age really stood in great need of reform, and this element of truth, with the aid that always accrues from persecution, gave him a power for the time that ensured a large measure of success on both sides of the Atlantic. The doctrinal system, however, if such it can be called, which he bequeathed to his followers, partook of the vague and enthusiastic character of his own undisciplined mind, and it has, therefore, been found inadequate to hold together its own adherents. That party which retains its original spirit has lost the aggressiveness that indeed the circumstances of the times at first alone excited; the other has either degenerated into a negative free-thinking akin to downright infidelity, or abandoned its communion for some more tangible form of faith. Neither branch of which the body of Friends now consists exerts any sensible influence upon the religious world without; and the close of the present century will record its virtual disappearance among the sects of Christendom. The plant was originally

one of generous stock and vital vigor, but it has eschewed that scholastic culture which should not only have preceded its implantation, but all along have refreshed and supplied the soil with the elements of growth; and now its withering trunk shows that it has taken no firm root in the ground of humanity, and its fruitless boughs convict it of departure from the established conditions of the divine blessing. So must any church inevitably succumb at length to the insidious foe, if it neglect to rear about it the bulwarks of science, and to station the sentinels of intelligence; though its citadel were garrisoned by angels and armed from the arsenal of Heaven.

It was nearly a hundred years after the rise of Quakerism that the same religious demands of the times which had induced that reform, recovered sufficiently from its ill-advised measures to reassert themselves in the person of John Wesley, the son of a rector of the Established Church, but whose ancestral history shows that Nonconformity ran in his veins. Reared amid the maternal, and, I may say, model family school at Epworth, and afterwards at the University of Oxford, he was distinguished in his early manhood for his accurate scholarship and mental culture. His writings bear ample testimony to his fondness for strictly literary pursuits, and his voice and efforts were ever and earnestly in favor of scholastic education. Shame on the few degenerates of our day who call him father, and yet disparage those schemes of ministerial education which none more gladly hailed than he. The religious movement of which he was confessedly the master spirit, to say nothing in this place of its theological or ecclesiastical features, undoubtedly owes its permanence and wide extent to the thorough and well digested organization which his mental habits, systematized especially by long and earnest scholastic discipline, enabled him to strike out and impress upon it. It is

chiefly because Methodism so closely resembles the subordination and exactitude of a school, that it has been so efficient and enduring. Much of this merit, no doubt, is due to the liturgical training of the Anglican Episcopacy, to the broad Evangelism of the independent churches, to the Quaker-like simplicity of the Moravian societies, from all of which various elements both of its forms and principles were borrowed; but no other than a true scholar would have combined and adjusted these materials without fanatical heresy or superstitious fanaticism. Nothing but a mind balanced by severe study and freighted with the wisdom of the past, could have saved him from shipwreck amid the excitements of his unparalleled career and the giddiness of his unbounded popularity; but the chart of history and science was spread out before him, and with a skill earned by patient investigation of former voyages, he guided his bark safely through the untried strait into a new religious association. While we ascribe to a higher Providence the success of the experiment, we should not fail to recognise the fitness of the instrument by which the result was secured. Let me add, if Methodism would be safe from the doom of Quakerism, let her cleave to the scholastic policy that distinguished her founder.

I have not time for more illustrations of the view which I am presenting, although they might be gathered from almost every page of history.* These are

* Should any reader be still inclined to question the correctness of the declarations of the indispensableness of scholastic training, in this address, without further qualification, he is requested especially to bear in mind two points: *First*, the great importance of contact, particularly in youth, with superior minds, not only for the sake of the mental and moral stimulus thereby received, and the communications imparted, but above all, the guiding, modifying and controlling influences thus directly, opportunely and continually exerted. Books, however excellent, are no adequate substitute for the living tutor; they are passive and come only when bidden; he is active and spontaneously interposes to preserve the pupil from error. The more original and earnest the student, the greater is the danger of his eccentricity, without a teacher; and it will accordingly be found that those individuals who have reached in after years the greatest eminence in literature, but whose

sufficient for an induction of the general principle, which indeed few would be so hardy as formally to deny, that a regular education in a school adapted to the purpose gives a great advantage as a preparation for any pursuit in which the *mind* is chiefly concerned, either as the subject or object. This is manifestly the case with regard to the occupation of teaching, whether from the school-desk, the professor's chair, the rostrum, the pulpit, or the press; and it is scarcely less evident with respect to the other learned professions, technically so called, of law, medicine, theology and philosophy. That it is not so essential to success in commerce, manufactures and agriculture, may readily be conceded; and yet it is highly important even in these associations that one be well informed before entering upon them concerning the sciences and arts, which have so largely contributed in modern times to their expansion and utility. In short, (for I must not prolong this discussion,) while a scholastic education is desirable for a person in any sphere of life, not only for the satisfaction and positive pleasure which the mental discipline and stores of knowledge thus acquired are sure to afford him, but also as a means of enlarging the scope of his influence, and adding finish to his whole character; it is almost indispensable to every one who aspires to sway his fellow men and mould the generations to come. The very husbandman, mechanic or merchant is himself compelled to pass through a long term of preparation, practical, it is true, but yet a process of

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early studies were pursued in the absence of such superintendence, present the most noted examples of egregious aberration from sober science, or one-sided whims in some important particular. *Secondly*, it is not claimed that the kind of literary pupilage here advocated is essential to success, in every walk of life, nor equally indispensable even in every department of science. Many have attained great usefulness in society, and some have risen to prominent fame in letters, without its aid. It is asserted, however, that all such persons, when tried by the just standard of solid and well-balanced *scholarship*, exhibit, somewhere in their career, glaring defects or excesses, both of information and judgment; and especially lack that fine critical taste which long and thorough cultivation under an experienced eye can alone develope into the intuitive certainty that may be called *literary instinct*.

learning, before he is qualified to enter upon his business in his own name; his indentures are his matriculation. The apprentice or clerk is but another name for student, and the farm, shop or store is, to all intents and purposes, a school, differing only in form according to the particular end in view. But all these, before entering their special preliminary terms, have need of a more or less extensive course of general education in those branches of knowledge which are useful to all ranks, conditions and employments; and they would be enabled to attain greater and more certain eminence in their respective callings, could they have the further advantage of having passed through an agricultural, mechanical or commercial institute, and there received such a comprehensive and systematic course of instruction in these departments as they are not likely to enjoy in the actual details of planting, building or trading, — which in any case will come in due time. And so too the lawyer, the physician or the clergyman, besides his collegiate studies, finds a benefit, or rather a necessity, in attending the law school, the medical institute or the theological seminary; yet after all this, he expects to learn much from the actual duties of his chosen profession, in the court room, the sick chamber, or the pulpit and pastorate. Of late Normal Schools have in like manner been instituted for the special purpose of training instructors of youth in the best methods of tuition and government, still leaving, of course, the multitude of practical minutiæ to their daily experience in the school-house and class-room.

Let me not, then, be misunderstood. It will be perceived I have used the term "scholastic," not in the technical sense, as applied to the system of Aristotelianism devised by the schoolmen of the middle ages,

but merely as expressive of a *school* in the ordinary and proper acceptation of this word. I have explained how this mode of education is not at variance with the practical, nor intended to supersede it. Neither can be substituted for the other. The scholastic is demanded prior to entrance upon the contemplated engagements in life, for the obvious and simple reason that the presence of these leaves little leisure or facility for abstract study, while the practical follows as the natural and necessary complement. The value of the former is even appreciated by those who for any cause have neglected it in early life; all such, who have risen by the force of other talents to intellectual promotion, have regretted to their dying day their irreparable error or misfortune. On the other hand, I doubt if a single real subject of scholastic education can be found who would advise its omission as a preliminary to the other, where opportunity allowed its attainment. Be it remembered, the choice does not lie between the two modes; the question is, shall the individual receive the scholastic first, and the practical afterwards; or shall he accept the latter at once, and have it alone? The order is irreversible; if he pass by the school when in youth, he will find that he has missed the golden opportunity for life; he cannot become a boy again. Cruel, therefore, is the well-meant, perhaps, but mistaken counsel sometimes given by older friends, urging the young man prematurely into the experimental duties of his proposed vocation, ere he has availed himself of the preliminary studies pertaining to it, with the fallacious assurance that he will be able afterwards to pick up the desired qualification, when erroneous habits have become fastened upon him. As well might the gardener hope to fertilize the soil after the field is sown, or while the grain is ripening. The tree grafted in its mature age with the buds of learning may yield a little precious fruit; but it will never attain the fair luxu-

riance of the sapling graft, while the native shoots will continually betray the uncultivated stock.*

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*An objection frequently urged against a college course of education, that it tends—like a sort of Procrustean bed—to reduce all minds subject to it to a common standard, constitutes the chief argument in its favor, when viewed in the proper light. A "liberal" education differs from a professional one precisely in this—that the former is designed as a general culture of all the powers of the mind, by the pursuit of those branches of knowledge which long experience has shown to be the most useful as a discipline and the most important in a literary career; while the object of the latter is simply to train one or more of the mental faculties in a given direction, and to furnish the individual with the information needed in a special calling. The one embraces the whole sphere of knowledge, and seeks to expand the mind to a full-orbed completeness; the other comprises but a single segment of the circle of truth, and aims merely at a one-sided improvement of certain natural abilities. Collegiate education, however, is not less practical than professional training, because less technical; nor less utilitarian, because less mercenary: for the various branches of science and fields of activity are so contiguous and connected, that no one can be said to be well prepared in any one department without some degree of familiarity with all the rest.

In any other sense than this, the objection here noticed is untrue, for a collegiate course has not and cannot be shown to have the slightest tendency to dwarf or cripple any of the native powers of the mind, but only to develop and discipline them all equally. It does not seek to clip the wings of fancy, to weaken the grasp of reasoning, to dull the eye of observation, or bind the limbs of genius; but only to curb their eccentricities, correct their extravagancies, guard against their infirmities, and, more than all, to nurse into vigor these or other talents of the soul that may be dormant or feeble in any student. If, therefore, the aptitude for any branch of learning—such as mathematics, (a frequent example,)—be peculiarly weak in any given case—the effect in almost every instance of want of culture, rather than of natural ability, (for to admit the total absence of this latter, were to acknowledge in so far a real mental imbecility,) the true policy evidently is to cultivate the defective habits of mind, as is done by the unbending requirements of the curriculum in college, not aggravate the deficiency by a disproportionate devotion to some more favorite pursuit, as in the partial course of a professional school. "If the edge be blunt, apply more strength"—in sharpening it.

This argument exhibits the proper order and just relation of professional with respect to collegiate study. The regular academic course lays the only adequate and solid foundation for the special professional course. I have never regarded it as necessary that every body should go to college, any more than that all persons should be lawyers, physicians, clergymen or literary philosophers. The common school is usually a sufficient college for the farmer, the mechanic and the tradesman; and yet he who would rise to eminence in even those humble paths of usefulness would be mightily aided by a thorough academical preparation. But he who would be something more than merely a calculating machine, a pettifogging barrister, a traveling drug-dealer, or a beneficed homilectician, must gain a broader mental scope and acquire a more extensive intellectual furniture than can be obtained merely in the scientific, law, medical or divinity school. These have an important office in fitting him for his chosen avocation as a citizen and to earn an honorable position among his fellows; but he needs before, beyond and above any of them a culture *as a man*, and to bring out in all its lineaments the intellectual image of his Maker within him. If the youth, having passed through his collegiate studies, has thus proved that he possesses a special talent in any one of these or other literary fields, he is then better prepared to enter and prosecute it without embarrassment from want of acquaintance with kindred subjects, without the liability to a mistake

Education, of course, cannot create talent, any more than a title can confer brains. If the man originally possessed no natural capacity, he will remain equally a blockhead, whether he have passed through a university or a workshop. It would be well if fond parents would sometimes remember the proverb about making a whistle out of a certain unmusical material. Schools ought not to bear all the odium if they, in common with other institutions of society, have occasionally turned out a dunce; a part of the blame should be laid upon Dame Nature, or somebody nearer home. Thus much however may be alleged in behalf of colleges, which can hardly be said of other modes of culture, that they have made many a man respectable who, but for his learning, would have been a perfect commonplace in the world. The few that have not been thus elevated by a liberal education may still be of some use to fill in the chinks of society; just as a cypher has a value if placed at the right hand of a higher digit.

It is desirable that literary institutions of every class should combine, as far as may be, the theoretical with the practical in their instructions. There is a world of pretence in education, as in every thing else. Professors fancy that they have a certain dignity of erudition to maintain, and the authors of text-books conceive it necessary for them to keep up a certain conventional style of profundity; and hence often arises a pedantry, imposing indeed to the uninitiated, but sadly unprofitable to the student. If the parade that only serves to cover superficiality in the one, and the superfluity that is but a vehicle for dulness in the other, were fairly stripped off, half the stumbling blocks in the way of learners would be removed. The same fault runs

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of his calling from ignorance of other spheres of engagement, and with greater promise of success by reason of his superior general discipline. The college therefore is by no means antagonistic to the cultivation of special talent in individuals, but rather aids them in filling their destined position the more securely and effectually.

through much of our didactic literature ; its point and edge are taken off by the attempt to sheathe it in pompous formulæ, as if it were unscholarly to write or speak so that men of common sense can understand. The English were so long in taking Sebastopol chiefly, it is said, because every order and arrangement had to go through a tedious routine established by military usage. A little Yankee tact and directness would have cleared the Malakoff long before the impetuosity of the French opened to their allies a passage into it. It is high time that we fully shook off the "red-tape" system inherited from the same source in literary matters. The prejudice of the masses against the learned will never be entirely overcome till the latter practically acknowledge that the highest proof of merit in their efforts is to make themselves intelligible to the ordinary mind. The shell of science needs to be cracked, that its kernel may be reached, not wrapped up in an extra rind of technical garrulity. The American mind demands more than Germanic lore or British solidity or Gallic vivacity as yet has singly afforded. We must have all these fused into one quick but continuous force, like the galvanic belt that girds the globe. The instructor, especially in our colleges, should have so complete a mastery of his subject, and so clear and immediate a process of communication, as to be able to transfer at once to the apprehension of his pupils the gist of the matter needed to elucidate each point, without the lumber that by-gone forms have piled around it. This, while conveying the largest amount of real information, will at the same time most effectually develop the student's own mental resources and stimulate his faculties : it will reproduce the old Athenian acumen, a spirit more than any other akin with the genius of our own Commonwealth. In short, we want "Young America" in the recitation room, as well as upon the outer theatre of life.

The definition of education thus proposed and briefly illustrated, affords a test of true scholarship. This consists not so much in the amount or variety of the information amassed, as in the accuracy and dexterity of the mental operations or habits formed by its acquisition. A man may therefore be very learned, like Adam Clarke or Parkhurst, without much real scholarship; or he may be a brilliant scholar, like Everett, without immense attainments. The object of a liberal education should be to form the latter character, while imparting a sufficient fund of knowledge to enable the scholar to investigate or converse intelligently upon any topic embraced in what is known as the circle of polite literature. Both these results every college should effect, and any thing short of this is in so far a failure of its due object. Whatever is beyond, if it still pertain to the domain of general literature, is appropriate to the office of the University; if to proficiency in any special department, it belongs to professional study. This last, I may observe, is specially befitting the position of a professor in an institution of learning, who should therefore be afforded sufficient leisure to push his investigations farther and still farther into the fields of research; and as a stimulus to these, as well as a means of bringing their results before the public, he should be allowed, if not expected, to be engaged in the preparation of text-books and other literary productions. The world owes most of its knowledge to such laborers, and intelligent directors of any scholastic institute will be ready to furnish their instructors every reasonable facility and encouragement of this character within their power, for the promotion of science in general, were it but for the sake of the honor and efficiency that thereby accrue to their own institution. In fine, while it is required that the collegiate scholar should not be ignorant upon any branch of modern science, physical or metaphysical,

(including in the latter philology, mathematics and ethics,) it is essential that he have acquired those habits of application, discrimination and taste, without which he is still a booby, however erudite, or a coxcomb, however fluent. Genius itself will not make amends for the lack of any of these elements, but will ofttimes the rather serve to render the defect the more glaring. What avails the piercing eye of the eagle that could brave the sun, if his clipped wings tie him down to earth; or who trembles at the lion's earthquake roar, when his cage bars make his strength the sport of the gaping throng?

The civilized world has never been destitute of schools, to which may ultimately be traced all its social culture and improvement. The Egyptian temples were the earliest depositories of learning, and the priests were not more the ministers of religion than the devotees and conservators of science, such as it then was. Moses, who afterwards embodied the same distinction of a learned caste in the Levitical order, was not the only one who became versed in all the lore of Egypt; thither repaired, as to the Germany of ancient times, every one who wished to perfect himself in such knowledge as then existed. Thales and Pythagoras, the founders of two of the earliest sects of Grecian philosophy, are known to have derived important hints, to say the least, from the Egyptian mysteries, into which the latter was at great pains to be thoroughly initiated; while a large, perhaps the most important part of the writings of Herodotus, "the father of history," consists of his travels and observations in that country. The sculptured monuments of the valley of the Nile attest this ancient pre-eminence in literary pursuits, which continued to distinguish the nation down to the burning of the famous library of Alexandreia, and Egyptology is still one of the most interesting branches of study. It is curious to observe the same connection between

science and religion in the celebrated institution of the Magi among the Persians and Babylonians, which was historically the next great school of antiquity, and which, little as its details have reached modern times, had the honor of being the first to ascertain and welcome the advent of the world's Redeemer. Of Athens as a seat of learning, I have already spoken. Its Porch and Academy have been the very titles of educational institutes ever since, and the various schools of philosophy of which it was the focus are familiar to every student. The Greek intellect, sharpened, strengthened, polished by their influence, has made the history and literature of that small city immortal. Victorious Rome was content to become her pupil and copyist. To this day the productions of her poets, historians, philosophers and orators have remained the standard of all just criticism, and their names the very synonymes of perfection in the world of letters. There is little in modern books, except what is due to the Bible or to the discoveries of physical science, that may not find its original in the Greek Classics. The dark ages, as they are called, were not without their schools; the monasteries were not merely the abodes of asceticism, but rather the colleges of the times, and the monks were the chief instructors of youth in the liberal arts. The Caliphs of Bagdad and the Saracens of Spain were also eminent patrons of learning. Algebra bears to this day the name of its Arabic origin, and modern chemistry is the offspring of mediæval alchemy. The educational zeal of the Reformers I need not allude to. The glory and strength of Protestantism consist in its spread of intelligence. Of late years the Sunday-School has been added to its schemes of instruction. The Pilgrim Fathers erected the schoolhouse beside the church, and our national public school system is the pride of their descendants. In no land, not even in Prussia, where education is compulsory,

are the people more thoroughly committed to the policy of schools than in this republic; and in none of its states has this plan been more liberally organized than in our own, the metropolis of which has set a magnificent example of even collegiate instruction, afforded gratuitously to her citizens. The tax for the Free Academy is regarded as legitimate as that for the Croton Water.

I have no share in the apprehensions of some, that we are establishing too many colleges in this country; the more the better, provided they are well endowed. The number of students always increases with the facilities for study, and observation proves that if a college is not at hand, they will be obliged in most cases to content themselves with a lower degree of education; the expense and inconvenience are usually too great, if it be located at a distance, while its presence in the midst of a community is a continual incentive to the youth to avail themselves of its privileges. It is Yale College that has made New-Haven the Athens of America, and the proximity of Harvard University has no doubt contributed very materially to the literary eminence of Boston. Troy has already gained an enviable celebrity for her schools; and she only needs the successful influence of her University to complete her character for intelligence as well as enterprise. I might add, as a consideration not likely to be slighted by shrewd business men, that the influx of students from neighboring regions which a superior institution creates, brings a large accession of influence and activity—and money too. The five hundred or more students of Yale College, spending each on an average, probably not less than five hundred dollars a year there for board, tuition and incidentals, add at least, $250,000 to the cash income of the city. I presume the Trojans would have no objection to divide a quarter of a million yearly among them. It would soon pay back, with a

handsome and permanent interest the investment required to put the University on an ample basis. As to the excessive multiplication of colleges in this State, I don't believe a word of it. Look at Germany: in that small country are crowded about as many full universities, with their score and more of professorships, all in successful operation, as we have puny colleges in the whole United States; to say nothing of the large number of German gymnasia, which are themselves equal to nearly any of our colleges. Little New-England alone has eleven colleges, including two full universities, and they rather help than interfere with one another; students come there from all parts of the Union, because it is the land of colleges, which have diffused a literary atmosphere that can hardly be found anywhere else. The Empire State can easily sustain eight colleges, scarcely one of which has yet attained the rank of a full university. The valley of the Hudson deserves to be represented more distinctively than it can be by either of the three located at its mouth; what section of the state can be found more worthy to contain one that shall be a university in fact as well as in name? If the public spirit of Troy shall prove, as it now promises, commensurate to the honor, there is nothing to prevent her securing such an institution for herself. No one must imagine that such a result can be brought about without large, united and continued effort. The funds already realized and pledged for this purpose, although in themselves a noble sum, are by no means sufficient for the permanent maintenance of a college, much less of a university; at least as much more must be secured to render the design successful. The proper *endowment* is the practical test as to whether the Troy University is needed or not. Upon the prompt liberality of the citizens of this immediate vicinity will mainly depend the answer to this question. "The gods help

them that help themselves," and our neighbors are very apt to act upon the same maxim.*

* It may not be inappropriate here to state that the plan of the Troy University embraces in its collegiate course the practical features of the American college system, by which a thorough drill in the classics and mathematics is secured by daily recitations, and a sufficient acquaintance with the scientific, philosophical and æsthetical branches is made through lectures and other exercises; while at the same time the Scientific Course affords to those students whose time and object are more limited a more direct, although but partially literary, preparation for the practical affairs of life. The University Course, which properly succeeds these, and is conducted by means of lectures on the higher principles of science, literature and art, will enable those who wish to prosecute more thoroughly the subjects elementarily treated in the under-graduate career with all the advantages peculiar to the German University system. In addition to these facilities, it is in contemplation to establish special schools for professional study, under the same charter and on the same grounds, but each with separate buildings, trustees, funds and faculty, (the President of the University forming a common link to secure uniform co-operation,) for those who have the learned professions (technically so called) in view, namely—Law, Medicine and Theology. These, with the University Course of Philosophy, will constitute the full complement of the Arts, and will include all the advantages of the English University system. I venture to suggest that if the Rensselaer Institute, which has long attained the highest rank as a Scientific School, in the city of Troy, were combined as an additional feature of this higher department, it would not only form an admirable supplement to the scheme of education thus proposed, but greatly enhance the symmetry and efficiency, not to say extent, of its educational influence, without in the least compromising its high character or internal administration. The whole programme thus delineated forms a complete and compacted series of institutions that cannot fail, sooner or later, to constitute a most powerful focus of light and centre of attraction to the ambitious youth of our land.

Nothing commensurate with this threefold development of advanced education has heretofore been attempted in this country. The separate professional schools of Yale and Harvard, and the post-graduate departments of Columbia and Union, are each but parts of the scheme here proposed. If, as will probably soon be found to be both advantageous and practicable, some of the studies of the under-graduate course were made elective, by the partial substitution of modern for ancient languages, of the New-Testament and Hebrew for classic authors, and of advanced science and literature for the more abstruse mathematics, so as to reduce the four years to three for such as intend to take the University or Professional course in addition, the whole range of topics might be covered by diligent students without any material omission in five years' time, especially if the requirements for admission into the Freshman class are maintained at their proper standard. This would bring a higher point of education than has yet been possible for American youth, entirely within their reach; and would form an era in the College system of this country. We hope, at no distant day, to afford such facilities and attractions for students, and in so feasible a form, that none shall be obliged to forego the highest culture for lack of time and means, or resort to foreign lands for want of an opportunity at home.

Another leading feature in the founding of the Troy University, upon which it seems proper to make at least a passing remark, is its entire freedom from sectarianism. While it is the clearly recognised duty of the Church, with the aid of the State, to provide for and superintend the education of youth, yet is there nothing in the branches usually embraced in an academic course that need elicit any denominational peculiarities of sentiments or action. Accordingly this Institution, although under the particular charge and responsibility of the Methodists, (and every College in the land claims some branch of the Christian Church as its special patron,) has

I have spoken of scholastic education in general, as a theme appropriate to the present occasion; I trust I may be indulged in a few words respecting the branch of instruction with which I have been specially entrusted in this institution. Of the importance of Biblical Literature among collegiate studies, I need say nothing here; the fact of its incorporation as a distinct chair in the course proposed by the Troy University, is sufficiently significant on that head: I can only wish that the responsibility of its duties had devolved upon a more able incumbent. I deem it not inappropriate to give brief utterance to some of the sentiments that have actuated me to attempt their discharge.

The title of the professorship assigned me implies that my principal text-book is to be the *Bible*. It will probably strike some as an anomaly that a layman should undertake an office which usually devolves upon the clergy. I might defend my choice of this field of labor by citing the similar pursuits of Dr. Kitto and Chevalier Bunsen; but I prefer a direct statement of the views that have induced me to devote myself to its culture. It appears to me that the community has usually mistaken the great prime object of revelation. We hear in almost every address in the Bible cause, arguments used implying that its circulation is intended and calculated to produce the conversion of those

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nevertheless secured, with a degree of cordiality hitherto unprecedented in similar enterprises, the co-operation of leading members of the various evangelical denominations, numbering among its trustees and faculty representatives from the Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Baptists. This combination, while it undoubtedly will often call for the exercise of forbearance and Christian courtesy among the legal custodians and literary conductors of the undertaking, is at the same time an element of power, socially as well as ecclesiastically, if rightly managed, that must ensure a wider scope and influence to all its operations. The fact is significant of the catholic spirit of the age, and is also eminently auspicious of the enlarged efficiency and success which result from concert of action and a mutual balance of otherwise one-sided views and tendencies.

into whose hands it is put. The irreligion of individuals and families is attributed to their destitution of the Holy Scriptures, and colporteurs are provided for the purpose of furnishing every man, woman and child throughout the land with a copy, in the hope that it will be the instrument of leading them to a saving knowledge of the truth. Now all this effort in the multiplication and distribution of the Bible is no doubt well in itself, and a commendable exercise of Christian liberality; for much good is doubtless thereby done in various ways, and in some instances the copies thus circulated appear to have been the means of reviving early religious impressions, and to have powerfully seconded other spiritual influences that eventuated in a decided change of moral character: but I apprehend that if the enterprise is induced and sustained by the hope of thereby directly effecting the regeneration or even reformation of the recipient of the Scriptures, we are acting under a false impression, and shall fail of our object. I have yet to learn of an authentic instance in which the simple perusal of the Bible, without preparatory and directive influences, has changed any one's religious sentiments, awakened his moral convictions or enabled him to attain the peace of a believer. I know that cases by the score are cited in Bible reports and anniversaries, as well as elsewhere, that seem and are intended to support such a conclusion; but the collateral forces that intensified the spiritual movement and directly brought on the soul-crisis, are either kept wholly out of view or assigned an inadequate share in the effect. Far be it from me to derogate a particle from the honor due the written word of God; I prize it infinitely above every other book, and count it a privilege to spend my days in exploring and elucidating its sacred contents; but I am not therefore disposed to enhance its importance by unsound arguments, nor to make it usurp the proper sphere of any other legiti-

mate institution of Christianity. Novel as the position may seem to many,* I invite a candid consideration of the opinion which I cannot but avow, that the simple reading of the naked text of Scripture, in our own or any other version, or even in the original itself, without any note, comment or person at hand to expound, direct, discriminate and apply the truth, has scarcely been and probably cannot be the actual means of leading a soul out of the bondage of sin.† The saving truth is

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*Since this sentiment was uttered,—which I have heard was immediately condemned as heretically untrue by some of my theological friends, and as warmly pronounced to be orthodox by others,—I have met with an extended vindication of the same view in the pages of the "*Journal of Sacred Literature*," 1854, April No., p. 7—10; July No., p. 522. The remarks (by Rev. Dr. Burgess, the editor,) are so apt to my design that I quote a portion of them: "It is not our purpose to dwell on the causes which led to the adoption of this novel principle of action [that of printing the Bible *without note or comment* for circulation among the common people] on the part of the [British and Foreign] Bible Society, or to justify or blame what perhaps in the circumstances was inevitable. We wish rather to call attention to a mode of thinking in relation to the Scriptures, which has accompanied the Society in its course, if it has not been created by it. The *old* doctrine, as far as we are aware, was that the Scriptures were part of a system, deriving their efficacy from their keeping their place in it, and being used according to its laws; the *new* one claimed for the Bible itself an independent standing, and treated it as sufficient for the conversion as well as the edification of mankind. In other words, before the epoch we are speaking of, [that of the rise of special societies for the circulation of the Bible,] the divine records were inseparably connected with oral teaching, and accompanied and assisted the preachers of the Gospel; but since then, they have been looked upon in many cases as adequate in their solitariness for all the purposes which Christianity contemplates. We do not affirm that the new theory has ever been broadly stated or acknowledged, but it has been extensively acted upon, and therefore has had a powerful influence. The thinking and phraseology of a very large portion of the Christian public has been imperceptibly moulded by this idea, and certainly many deeds of Christian benevolence proceed on a presumption of its entire truthfulness. The circulation of the Bible is often spoken of as identical with the spread of Christianity; its price has been talked of as the moral thermometer or scale by which it influence is to be tested; and the shipment of vast numbers to foreign shores has been estimated as little less than an evangelical inroad upon the powers of darkness. Every now and then some new phase of this idea startles the public, and calls for some energetic action." In short, the popular veneration for the word of God is in great danger of degenerating into mere *book worship*.

†Whatever may be thought of the doctrine here advanced, in its extreme application, it will yet probably not be disputed by any that the Christian church has always acted upon its assumption for all practical purposes, inasmuch as the conversion of mankind has never been left wholly to the written word of God without his spoken message attending it; and it cannot be denied that in the vast majority of cases persons attribute their conversion, (so far as external instrumentality is concerned,) to the living minister or private Christian. Whether therefore a few peculiar instances of solitary conversion by means of the Bible alone, can be substantiated or not, (and indeed it would be difficult to find a case of total disconnection

indeed there, all of it and in perfection; but there is so much of it, and it is so combined with historical, doctrinal and practical difficulties, that the uninitiated mind, with the additional embarrassment of a depraved heart and wrong previous habits of thought, would never, I believe, without some other external assistance, be able to discern it in that distinct and condensed form which is essential to regenerating faith. Those to whom the messages of the prophets were originally addressed, complainingly exclaimed, "Doth he not speak parables?" and our Savior declared of his own auditors, "Hearing they hear not, neither do they understand." The Ethiopian treasurer on the road to Gaza, reading Isaiah's almost historical prophecy of the Redeemer's passion, when Philip inquired, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" could only reply, "How can I except some man should guide me?" Of course the helping influences of the Holy Spirit are supposed to be present in every case; but its office is to enable the person to lay hold of the atonement as well as feel his need of it, after the intellect has apprehended it,—not to impart the truth directly and without regard to the ordinary process of enlightenment. An instance strikingly in point is that of John Wesley, as he landed in London, still groaning for deliverance from his burden of sin, after his American mission. He had gone to Georgia to convert the Indians, and he returned with the conviction that he was himself unconverted. In the graphic language of the forth-coming history of Methodism, "Here was a man of healthful temperament, of rare intelligence, of pre-eminent logical acuteness, who had read every line of Holy Scripture in the very language in which prophet or apostle had penned it; and yet, with the Bible in his hand and an anguish

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from all other religious influences,) the position assumed above remains so generally true as to warrant the distinction based upon it, and moreover to deserve greater attention than has usually been given to it.

of earnestness in his heart, he stumbles before the most important and most simple truths of revelation."* The author of this description is doubtless correct in describing the difficulty in this case to preconceived notions derived from education; but the same is true of any case, for every one, however brought up, even a heathen, has his own previous system of belief; and if the careful religious training of Wesley was still no warrant of correct views, who can hope for exemption from some kind of error sufficient to blind the eyes even while poring over the sacred pages? It was not through his own perusal or even study of the Scriptures themselves, but through their exposition by others, that he at last caught a view of the way of faith. While listening to a layman reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans among an evening assembly of Moravians in Aldersgate-street, he "felt his heart strangely warmed" with the hitherto unexperienced glow of divine love. A spark from the embers of the Reformation kindled the flame which spread from his breast throughout Methodism,—a system to which Henderson in Buck's Dictionary has the assurance to assert that Whitefield would probably have given birth, had the Wesleys never existed! For twenty-five years the founder of Wesleyanism had been constantly seeking personal religion with a devotion that has had few parallels, and with every facility that the volume of revelation could afford; but he attained it at length through the instrumentality of an humble and even indirect form of the *preaching* of that word, from the lips and pen of those who had themselves experienced its "power unto salvation." His conversion was but an illustration of the method which the Scriptures themselves prescribe as that appointed by heaven for this end: "For after that in the wisdom of God, the world

* *History of Methodism*, by Rev. Abel Stevens, LL. D, New York, 1858-9, vol i, p. 85.

by [natural] wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the [so-called] foolishness of PREACHING to save them that believe." The direct and personal communication of experimental truth to the judgment and conscience of the listener or reader, will be found in every instance, when carefully analyzed, to be the simple and only human instrumentality really efficacious in this result, much as we are disposed to overlook it and attribute the effect to what we may deem more suitable or worthier means. To this office, the most truly great and responsible, as I believe, that a mortal can fill, I make no pretension; I confess, I dare not aspire to it. The usefulness I seek lies in another path, which may however ultimately conduct to the same general issue.

What then is the legitimate function of the Bible in this important work or in the religious renovation of humanity? I cannot answer better than in the comprehensive words of the Book itself: "All Scripture, being given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Mark, its purpose is not mainly nor directly the conversion of sinners, but the establishment of the believer in personal piety, and the equipment of the minister for his sphere; it covers the details of Christian life and usefulness, rather than the point of induction into these. The introduction into a religious career, although included in its directions, is almost incidental and so involved in the mass of other and seemingly discrepant matter, that the novitiate himself is often puzzled in his attempt to interpret and apply the multiform instructions. If the object of revelation had been simply or chiefly to present a guide-book to the way of life, or to furnish a system of theology, it would have taken the form of a compendious manual like a modern catechism, and might have dispensed with the bulky introduction

of history, the dry abstracts of genealogy, the verbose effusions of poetry, the dim visions of prophecy, and the extended epistolary correspondence, which the sacred volume contains; but all these have their important uses in furnishing the Christian mind and pulpit, although of course they greatly complicate the task of understanding and applying the divine oracles. Hence arises the need of interpretation, an office co-ordinate with that of preaching, but which few who earnestly devote themselves to the latter can have leisure to prepare themselves adequately to fill. To this humble task I desire to consecrate my energies, and it is the hope of subserving this cause that brings me into your midst. May it appear in the great day of divine awards, that some honor is due to him who lays, though deep under the ground of verbal and exegetical criticism, the firm foundations of the spiritual temple, as well as to him who, on the open walls of Zion, brings to its place the top-stone with the jubilant shouts of grace.